

30 August 2011

Dear Member:

On behalf of the greater scientific community, and the more than millions of scientists, engineers, academics, students, and industry professionals represented by the hundreds of organizations, societies, and universities that we encompass, we strongly encourage you to consider the critical role of scientific research as you continue to work on the fiscal year 2012 budget. Innovative science protects public safety and national security, and supports our economic prosperity. Investing in critical science research now will create jobs and reinforce the American economy in the long run. Slashing science funding in order to reduce the national debt not only adversely affects immediate innovation, but will also stifle future economic growth and jeopardize our national security.

Scientific research and discovery have brought us monumental achievements that have improved and protected our way of life, including the more accurate and precise severe weather predictions that saved so many lives earlier this year during the tornado outbreaks throughout the South and in Joplin, Missouri. History shows that much of the growth we have enjoyed since World War II is the result of strong support for and investments in science and technology. And, while only four percent of the nation's workforce is composed of scientists and engineers, this group disproportionately creates jobs for the other 96 percent.

Despite this high level of return on investment that comes from funding science, federal funding for research and development as a fraction of GDP has declined by 60 percent in 40 years. Coupled with the stagnant federal funding of the last two years, this represents an unsustainable trend that cannot be allowed to continue in FY12. In contrast, China increased its R&D investment at an annual rate of 5.7 percent of GDP between 2001 and 2007.

We are also concerned with the responsibility placed upon the special congressional debt reduction committee. Should this group be unable to reach an agreement by the imposed deadline, the ensuing across-the-board cuts would have significant negative impacts on our ability to predict severe weather, provide clean drinking water and safe food, ensure safe aviation, enhance our basic understanding for addressing global challenges and prepare our next generation of scientists to keep us globally competitive. The consequences of such cuts would be very real and potentially devastating to the safety of the American public and economy, and we strongly encourage you to prevent that scenario from occurring.

Making wise investments in science is critical to our public safety, national security, and economic vitality. The long-term cost to the American people of failing to appropriately fund scientific research and development will be severe and far-reaching.

Sincerely,

American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Geological Institute
American Geophysical Union
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering
American Phytopathological Society
American Psychological Association
American Society for Microbiology
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Arctic Research Consortium of the United States
Association of American Geographers
Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists
Association of Population Centers
Biophysical Society
Consortium for Ocean Leadership
Council for Chemical Research
Cray Inc.
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Geological Society of America
International Society for Optics and Photonics
Materials Research Society
Michigan State University
National Association of Marine Laboratories
National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON)
Population Association of America
Research!America
Seismological Society of America
Semiconductor Industry Association
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics
University Corporation for Atmospheric Research
University of Pittsburgh